



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

LIBERIA IN THE NEW PARTITION OF WEST AFRICA

By Dr. George W. Ellis, K.C., F.R.G.S., Assistant Corporation Counsel of Chicago

West Africa is an indefinite geographic term employed in a general way to designate the territories comprised in the Republic of Liberia and the colonies of the different European powers on the West Coast of Africa.

What Lady Lugard calls the African Black Belt comprises a broad stretch of territory, extending across the African continent from the Senegal on the west to the Red Sea on the east and from the Sahara on the north to the equator on the south. Laced with numerous rivers embowered with trees, studded with luxuriant and silvan forests, inhabited by a wealth and variety of animals and birds, enriched with gold and diamonds and peopled in unnumbered millions by the finest black races of the globe, in natural wealth, wonder and magnitude, this is, perhaps, the most remarkable section of our globe. In mountain, lake and forest, in flower, landscape and scenery, and in bird, beast and man, this is one of the unrivalled and most picturesque portions of our earth.

This fascinating stretch of territory includes West Africa where its western limits are washed by the white crested billows of the Atlantic Ocean. With the exception of Liberia on the west coast and Abyssinia on the east, not only West Africa but all Africa, has been taken and partitioned and the African races against their wishes have been compelled to submit to the indeterminate control and subjection of alien powers.

Because of its great natural wealth West Africa has been of increasing political and commercial importance. From Great Britain, Germany, France, Spain and other European nations, rapid transportation facilities and cable communi-

cations have brought the ports and marts of West Africa within easy reach of those of Europe and the world. So that today West Africa is a growing factor in the economic production and consumption of international trade products. Europe says she is engaged in the philanthropic work of redeeming West Africa and in the glorious process millions of dollars are secured through West African commerce. It was partly to protect this growing trade,—though in its infancy,—and African discoveries, that West African colony holding powers decided to partition Africa some thirty odd years ago and to exercise the political sovereignty and jurisdiction thereof.

THE NEW PARTITION OF WEST AFRICA

Notwithstanding West Africa was divided among European powers, this world war has had its West African consequences. Now that the war has practically closed we are looking backward as well as forward to see how far the people of West Africa have been driven from their former course.

Rich in mines and with an area of 33,700 square miles, Togoland, just below Liberia on the Gold Coast, was the first German West African colony to fall into the grasp of the Allies, in their determined policy to force Germany from the continent of Africa.

The second Germany colony taken was Kamerun, a fertile district south of Togoland and covering an area of 190,600 square miles.

The third was German Southwest Africa, lying adjacent to the British possessions in South Africa, the second largest German possessions in Africa and containing an area of 317,953 square miles.

The largest and most imposing of German holdings in Africa was German East Africa, containing some 365,644 square miles. This was the last German colony to fall in Africa, and whose prolonged and protracted resistance to allied subjection gave rise in the German mind to the vision of "Middle Africa," which with "Middle Europe" completed

the dream and picture of German mastery and dominion in the political and economic conquest of the world.

With their mammoth wealth of billions of dollars, the acquisition of these German colonies by the Allies pre-supposes some kind of a division among the conquering powers, and presents to us the question of The New Partition of West Africa.

As interested as we are in The New Partition of West Africa, because of its ultimate influence upon the relations between the lighter and darker worlds, we are particularly concerned here in how far this new partition will effect the great mission and destiny of the Liberian Republic, which holds out to the millions of the African races the high hopes of self-discipline, self-government and Christian civilization.

The importance and significance of this question is disclosed in a glance at the ideals for which the Liberian nation stands and the hitherto European colonial attitude not only toward Liberia, but toward American and democratic principles for West Africa.

WEST AFRICAN COLONIAL GOVERNMENT

The form of political machinery for social control employed by the different European powers in their various West African colonies, in a general way, is very similar. The colonial government is administered by a governor and his council. Each colony is divided up into what are called commissioner-districts and are presided over by a district commissioner. The authority of the governor is enforced by the usual civil officers and courts, with a reserve force of soldiers thought to be sufficiently numerous to suppress any uprising among the Native Africans. The district commissioners are distributed through the hinterlands and each usually has at his command a detachment from the colonial frontier force and in many instances exercises judicial functions with certain Native chiefs when not sitting alone. The governor and council make the laws and are clothed with great political power. In some of the colonies the Native races have representation on the Council and in others none.

EARLY COLONIAL ATTITUDE TOWARD NATIVE RACES

Early West African colonial governments seem to have been based upon the principle that the Native races had little or no rights other than to obey. The Africans were given little or no participation in the governments. They were taxed to maintain a political system of high salaried and in many instances overpaid officials from Europe who believe religiously in the right of the few to govern the many in the interest of the former. African institutions were regarded as mere superstitions to be inconsiderately and ruthlessly destroyed.

The West African colonial governments were not only characterized by the race prejudice which too often attends and marks the political and social intercourse between the white and darker races; but they were charged in addition with the class feeling which pervades the political institutions and social structure of European governments and society. Europeans resident temporarily in West Africa seemed possessed by an absorbing passion to make their fortunes and return to Europe as soon as possible. It was very evident that the white races were in West Africa, braving the dangers of the climate only for the supreme purpose of wealth making in trade or in fortune finding. The colonial governments gave them such ardent assistance as to make the shameful neglect of the interest of the great masses of Native peoples stand out in the boldest relief.

One of the results was that the colonial governments and administrations were attended with all kinds of friction with Native tribes, which were not adjusted to their sudden subjection to the arbitrary political authority of alien races, who were not hesitating to abrogate African laws and customs; violate the African's rights; destroy without understanding them African political and social institutions; and were compelling Africans in their own native land to submit to taxation without representation or consent, and obey a government whose officials and administrators were too largely saturated with the double prejudice of race and class, while the wealth of African forests, fields and mountains were being transported in millions to Europe.

In the various African colonies the tribes at different times made such resistance as they could against the encroachments of European colonial governments, but to no avail; and one punitive expedition after another was sent against them. Tribe after tribe was convulsed, butchered and dis-severed; African towns one after another were burned and destroyed; African women and children by the thousands were subjected to all the horrors and cruelties of punitive and exterminating wars. And although all West Africans were completely suppressed and many of their chiefs and kings deported, exiled or executed; yet, in the process white officials and colonial governments were thrown under the psychological influence of a fear of Native uprisings which lingers with many of them still. The fear was so great in Sierra Leone that West Indian soldiers under white officers are to this day stationed at Freetown, the chief center of this British colony. The bravery and heroism displayed by many of the African leaders and people in defense of their liberties and their lands, as in Ashanti, contain materials for the most thrilling stories in romance and in fiction.

REFORM IN WEST AFRICAN COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION

But there came a better era in West African colonial administration. The wholesale slaughter of Africans, attending the subjection of West Africans and the administration of so many of the colonial governments, touched the heart of humanity and met with increasing disfavor in Europe. The nature and character of African institutions, from a scientific standpoint, aroused the interest of scholars and competent African resident students, and gradually the African began to be disclosed to the world in his intellectual, religious, moral and social conditions, in aspects something like he really is.

It was during this time that the immortal Mary H. Kingsley travelled in West Africa, studied the African in his own home and the varied phases of his tropic life, and through her works entitled, *Travels in West Africa* and *Studies in West Africa*, not only profoundly influenced all colonial governments on the West Coast, but changed and

altered fundamentally the attitude of all Europe toward Africa and its races.

Dealing with the aspects and conditions of different tribes there followed many valuable contributions in the classic works of Sir Harry H. Johnston, John Sarbah, Sir A. B. Ellis, Casley Hayford, and other noted writers; but above the influence of them all was the voice and pen of West Africa's most noted and distinguished writer and scholar, Dr. Edward W. Blyden, lately deceased, pleading before the bar of Europe for political and social justice for Africa and for Africans.

In honor and memory of Mary H. Kingsley,—who truly gave her life to redeem Africans from the injustice and tyranny of European colonial governments,—the African Society of London was founded and organised for the purpose of studying African Native institutions and conditions in the interest of the truth, for the guidance and information of Europe and colonial administration in Africa. Elsewhere other societies with similar purposes came into existence. Mr. E. D. Morel, author of *Affairs of West Africa*, editor of *The West African Mail*, a weekly publication, and other notable works, threw himself with remarkable zeal and ability into this new movement toward the African races and their control. There flourished for a time a noted publication in London entitled *West Africa*, which with *The West African Mail* were in daily and sympathetic communion with the different sections of West Africa and which set forth weekly the truth in the interest of justice and a square deal to all West Africans.

In Germany, France, Great Britain, and even in Belgium, some of the most prominent names in Europe are now identified with the much needed work of reform in European colonial administration in Africa. So that the colonial administrations in West Africa have been compelled to modify and change their attitude toward the Native races, still they are far from what they should be. In German West Africa the local government is still very rigid and prejudiced toward the Native Africans. In the vast territories controlled by Great Britain more consideration is given to the rights and

institutions of Africans than in former times, but "the man on the spot," like the white man of the Southern American states, is pleading to the higher home government to be let alone on the ground that he has special knowledge on the Native situation, and therefore knows best what to do. The attitude of the colonial government in the Congo toward the Natives remains, after the most searching international exposure, a sad reflection upon the government of the advance nations of the backward ones. And unfortunately "the man on the spot" is permitted still to exercise too much authority and power over the Native Africans.

M. Du Ponty, governor general of French West Africa at Dakar, informed the writer at different times of the very agreeable manner in which the French colonial governments are now getting along with their Native subjects and of the number that were being educated in the colonies and in France, and of the increasing extent to which the Natives were permitted to participate in the colonial government.

DEVELOPMENT OF RESOURCES TO NEGLECT OF NATIVE RACES

While the colonial governments in West Africa from an American standpoint are open to some criticism in the broad human interest of the Native races and future general welfare, still too much praise cannot be bestowed upon the courage and industry of Europeans in all the West African colonies, in blotting out the slave traffic with all its cruelty and degradation, in abolishing barbarous practices among certain tribes, in assistance and education given in individual cases to Native Africans, in establishing improved methods of sanitation, in railroad construction, in facilities for telegraphic and wireless communication, and in the exploration and development of all material interests of the continent, to enable Europeans to live longer in Africa and to enable Europe to secure more wealth from the commerce and resources of the African races.

The thought above all others to be emphasized is that in this great process of African material development, there is

too little effort devoted to the advancement and development of the great masses of the Native peoples on the one hand, and on the other among too many Europeans resident in West Africa, official and otherwise, the feeling and belief are too strong that the darker races have a special and inferior place to other races, and that it is among the great aims of life for which the functions of government should be employed and all social pressure invoked, to keep these darker races on this inferior plane.

WEST AFRICAN COLONIAL ATTITUDE TOWARD AMERICANS

The great majority of Europeans and officials in West Africa do not seem to be of the best class. Service in Africa has always been considered very hazardous for the white man on account of the African fevers, etc. And with the exception of the highest officials and some of the heads of large commercial firms and corporations persons are selected who are unable to secure service in more favored fields. Some of the governors are evidently from the highest European classes, but the greater number of European subordinate officials give evidences that they are taken from the under classes; and when they enter upon their duties in West Africa, with large interest, responsibilities and trusts committed to their care, they too often become arrogant, conceited and oppressive, in their endeavors to impress the public that they belong to the upper European classes. They appear in too many instances in West Africa to devote more thought and effort in aping European nobility in petty snobbery than in the serious solution of the many political and social problems with which they must constantly contend as administrators.

It is natural anyway for the colonial governments in West Africa to be prejudiced toward democratic institutions because of European prejudice toward them. The white American for this reason will find much prejudice against him in West Africa. European officials like and demand more professed and formal courtesy than Americans show officials. The freedom, conversation and conduct of the white Ameri-

can keeps colonial officialdom very uneasy less American democratic manners and ideas spread to colonial subjects and thus interfere with European policies of political and social control. Europeans readily recognize the value of Americans along many industrial lines and so long as the latter confine themselves to purely industrial pursuits in the development of the natural resources of the country, there seems to be little or no objection to a few white Americans.

In South Africa where American steam engines and agricultural implements are meeting with increasing demands and where the white population is much larger in proportion to the Native, still there the prejudice against and the fear of American democratic manners and political ideas are very marked and manifest, largely on account, however, of the missionary activities of American Negroes. The anti-American feeling has not been so pronounced in West Africa because of the paucity of resident Americans, aside from the missionaries, notwithstanding the white population is exceedingly small in comparison to the Native. Nevertheless there is the same feeling as in South Africa because the Natives are restive under the government of an aristocratic political system, imperial in rigor, form and feature. And because of the presence of Liberia and a few Americans there has appeared from time to time what were considered well founded reasons for the political psychology of some of the West African colonial governments.

White American missionaries at different times sought release through the American Legation at Monrovia from oppressive and needless official restrictions on the southwest coast against their locomotion and freedom, some of which went so far as to prohibit them from leaving the colony. But in some of the colonies where the administrators are certainly of a high order, where Native problems are seriously and ably considered as in Northern Nigeria, where prejudice is not so patent and where the hand of authority is neither so heavy nor so oppressive, while white Americans will find little or no signs of outward unwelcome, still they need not flatter themselves with the thought that they are the objects of particular love and affection.

PURPOSE AND NATURE OF THE LIBERIAN DEMOCRACY

In establishing the Liberian Republic, its founders had in mind the creation of a democracy for black men from every section of the world, after much the same fashion that the United States of America was considered an asylum for the oppressed of every land. In so far as the United States had failed in its ideal of a free democracy to all men and races upon the principles of justice and equality, and had been limited to a free democracy for white men only, Liberia was settled with the view and hope that on the West Coast of Africa the black man could govern himself and work out his own destiny and civilization under the institutions of a free and black democracy. As the owners of the soil, the rulers of the state, and the teachers of the people, here the black man was to take his place in the family of nations not simply as a black man, but as a man, endowed as other men and susceptible to the same culture, dignity and refinement.

LIBERIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD NATIVE RACES

And while the Liberians were founding a government where black men, exiled from Africa, might return and be free to enjoy all the opportunities and privileges of other men in an independent sovereignty of their own with all the inducements and inspiration of a self-governing democracy, yet in their Declaration of Independence, Bill of Rights, and Constitution, they took care to provide for the liberty of all men amply regulated and protected by law.

They not only held before the whole West African world the dazzling spectacle of a Negro nationality fashioned after the most modern and improved methods in government and statecraft, but they unified their political interest with that of the Native races by a constitutional provision that made the latter, like other persons of African descent, eligible for the citizenship of this new state. They identified themselves further with the aborigines by linking with the establishment of the Liberian government the purpose of bearing the light not only of Christianity and western civilization to the pagan Africans, but they sought the agricultural

and industrial uplift of the Native peoples as well, as is partly disclosed in a miscellaneous provision of the Liberian constitution.¹

And before the Liberian colony had entered the Family of Nations she had more than justified her existence by her services to humanity and civilization in the abolition of the traffic in slaves, and in her appeal to all Christendom she set forth few declarations more significant than when she said:

The Native African bowing down with us before the altar of the living God, declares that from us, feeble as we are, the light of Christianity has gone forth; while upon that curse of curses, the slave trade, a deadly blight has fallen as far as our influence extends.²

And since the birth of the Republic thousands of Natives have been incorporated into the Liberian body politic and many are today occupying leading places in the educational, religious, and political life of the state, with finally a representative in the Cabinet as Minister of Education and with an enrollment of more than one-half of the children attending the Liberian public and denominational schools.³

DIFFICULTIES OF LIBERIAN POLITICAL IDEAL

The Liberian ideal is an inspiring one and it appeals to the admiration of the Negro peoples in every section of the civilized globe. At the time it was launched upon the West African coast the political and economic subjection of black men in certain countries were such as to guarantee great promise for the success of the Liberian venture. To find an asylum in Liberia then attracted the best Negro minds and characters under oppression in other countries. The

¹ Section 13 of Miscellaneous Provisions of the Constitution, and Declaration of Independence.

² Declaration of Independence & Dynamic Factors in the Liberian Situation, *Journal of Race Development*, at Clark University, Worcester, Mass. by George W. Ellis.

³ Education in Liberia, Report of Education, 1907.

great continent of Africa with its amazing wealth and interesting stalwart races, living for the most part under their tribal institutions in their own lands, afforded an opportunity for Negro leadership especially from the United States to be found in no other quarter of our earth. At the most strategic point on the West Coast—at the head of the famous Gulf of Guinea—Liberians and their friends pictured in their minds the future of the West African republic as a powerful and dominating Negro nationality, melting for miles the Native tribes across the rolling plains of the Sudan into a solid and unified democracy, that would not only command all West Africa but exercise a tremendous influence in international thought and affairs.

Often spoken of as “Little America” by the aborigines, the influence of the Liberian republic was carried along the trade routes to the finer tribes of the plains and plateaux of the far interior. The kings and princes of Musahdu exchanged greetings and messages with the presidents of Liberia at Monrovia.

But the lustre of this Liberian ideal was dimmed by the occurrence of two great events: The liberation of the colored peoples in North America and the West Indies and the partition of Africa by the European powers. The physical emancipation of the blacks in the New World has held from Liberia the vast majority of the Negro peoples with their leaders, by holding out to them the hope of complete freedom and equality in the lands of their exile; and the partition of Africa has not only limited the physical and social fields of Liberian activity, but has forced those who have cast their destiny there into a hard struggle to keep the sovereignty of the nation intact in an ever decreasing geographic domain.

So that the 60,000 or 70,000 Americanized Liberians have been forced to witness the painful and distressing experience of seeing the reduction of their original territorial limits, by one neighbor and then another, to about 60,000 square miles, with a present Native population of not more than 2,500,000. And but for the good offices and assistance of the American government in the Liberian crisis of 1908, the chances are

that Liberia would have been completely absorbed by the European colony-holding powers.⁴

The purpose of the Liberian government, the democratic principles of its Bill of Rights and Constitution, the doctrine that black people have a right to rule, and the message of equality, liberty and self-respect, which the Liberian people bear not only to the Native races but to the Negroes of the world, calling them through self-government to a dignified and enlightened manhood, are inconsistent with the temper and spirit of the colonial government of subject races in the interest of the governed and with the doctrine of permanent subordination and natural inferiority of the black peoples to the white, for which most of the European colonial governments stand in Africa.

EUROPEAN ATTITUDE TOWARDS LIBERIA

Before the partition of Africa Great Britain and France gave many and signal proofs of their friendship and good will toward Liberia and there seems little or no doubt that the governments at Paris and London were sincere in their expressed good wishes for the future good fortune of the Liberian state. But subsequent events indicate that this friendly attitude of these two governments has been considerably modified. A complete knowledge of all the facts forces the conviction that the local government at Sierra Leone has been, perhaps, the largest single factor in this change. The colony of Sierra Leone was established by British philanthropists—among them Clarkson and Wilberforce—as an asylum for oppressed Negroes in the British colonies of the West Indies, during the latter part of the 18th century. And it was from this experiment that American philanthropists obtained the idea of the Liberian colony for American freedmen.

It is important here to recall that in founding the Liberian colony in 1820, the government of Sierra Leone refused to

⁴ Dynamic Factors in the Liberian Situation, *Journal of Race Development*, Clark University, Worcester, Mass., January, 1911, George W. Ellis.

Political Importance of the International Loan in Liberia, *Journal of Race Development*, Clark University, July, 1912, George W. Ellis.

permit the American emigrants to even land at Freetown, and they were forced to locate on the fever-stricken Island of Sherbro, south of Sierra Leone, where most of the Americans died before they secured the more suitable site at Monrovia.

Beginning with this act of unfriendliness the Sierra Leone government supported and encouraged British subjects in their meddling with tribal and intertribal matters and in their resistance to the enforcement of Liberian customs revenue laws, which resulted in the first great so-called Anglo-Liberian boundary dispute, starting about 1856 and ending in 1883, when over the diplomatic activity of the United States government, extending earnestly through many years, the Liberian northwest territory between the Sherbro and Mano rivers was added to the colony of Sierra Leone.

The triumph of the Sierra Leone government for its part in the working up of the complications of this first boundary dispute and so reporting the situation as to bring the London government to the unchangeable determination of settling the difficulties only by taking this northwest territory, over the opposition of both Liberia and the United States, has had, perhaps, more influence upon the course of Liberian destiny than any other single fact since the declaration of Liberian independence.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century the development of African exploration and the pressure of European population suddenly changed the attitude of practically all Europe toward Africa. European governments acquired almost the whole of the continent, during which expansion was excited and encouraged by rewarding explorers and administrators, responsible for territorial expansion, with promotions and titles of rank and nobility. During the height of this European fever for African territory, the first successful attack upon the territorial integrity of Liberia was made, and the London government was at last prepared to follow, after a long and tireless effort on the part of the colonial government of Sierra Leone, religiously and with firmness the advice of what is now so often called "the man on the spot." Great Britain had no more right to take this Liberian northwest territory in 1883 than in 1856, but the

passion for African territory had become so strong among European nations, that it seemed unable to permit Liberia to escape, even from so great and just a nation as Great Britain.

Heretofore, Liberia had been largely protected because of European respect for the known American origin and interest in Liberian welfare. But the final British attitude in this northwest difficulty showed that the time had arrived when something more than American diplomacy was necessary to save Liberia from the European desire for African territory. This was regarded as a test case and it was believed that in it in a way, America disclosed the extent to which she would go to protect Liberia. The bad effects of this case have continued to the present time.

To maintain her political parity with Great Britain in West Africa, France soon followed the bad example set by Great Britain and in 1892, after a few preliminaries, added the Liberian territory from the Cavala to the San Pedro River to the French West African possessions.

Since then other valuable territories in the Liberian hinterlands have been taken by France, touching both the Saint Paul and Kavala basins. And only a few years ago Great Britain succeeded in getting the district of Kaure Lahun, which the American commissioners to Liberia reported in 1909 was being wrongfully occupied by British authorities. In this forced process of territorial contraction, under the circumstances, Liberia has been exceedingly fortunate in maintaining her sovereignty and this was done only with the greatest difficulty.⁵

PRE-WAR OUTLOOK IN WEST AFRICA

Notwithstanding the frequent loss of territory and the difficulties which thus far have attended the history and efforts of the Liberian people to establish a self-governing democracy for black men on the border of the greatest Black

⁵ Dynamic Factors in the Liberian Situation, *Journal of Race Development*, January, 1911, Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, George W. Ellis.

Belt of the world, there is still a great future dawning before the nation. Like other portions of West Africa, Liberia is rich in the wealth and wonder of mine, field and forest.

By the terms of an international agreement between the United States, Great Britain, France and Germany Liberian sovereignty has been preserved, and with her territorial limits defined the Republic now enters upon an era of industrial and political progress which will make the Liberian ideal an ever increasing factor in West African development.⁶

While Liberia settles down to her high mission, West Africa continues in beneficial changes in the policy of the colonial governments toward the Native races. More and more the truth is gaining ground that Africa is the black man's land and that he is entitled to an increasing participation in the government of himself and his country. More and more Native institutions are being respected, and instead of trying to make a European out of an African in Africa, more attention is given to the development of the Native along his own lines and institutions, for a high and glorious destiny in his tropical environments.

When Dr. Blyden, one of the best informed if not the greatest authority on West Africa, was retiring from the Directorship of Mohammedan Education in Sierra Leone, January 24, 1907, he described the net results of European control upon the African under the old and new régimés and then added:

"Africa may congratulate herself, thank God, and take courage."⁷

Aside from the many authoritative works which in recent years have poured a torrent of compelling facts upon the European world concerning the true condition and value of the African and his continent, in *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, and *Nigeria: Its Peoples and its Problems*, Capt. C. W. J. Orr, R.A., and Editor E. D. Morel have made two

⁶ Political Importance of the International Loan in Liberia, *Journal of Race Development*, July, 1912, Clark University, Worcester, Mass., George W. Ellis.

⁷ *Journal of the African Society*, No. 43, Vol. 11, p. 364, April, 1912.

more very valuable contributions to the serious discussion of African problems and peoples.⁸

With a wealth of facts these two writers, though from different points of view, are most convincing witnesses in a remarkable field for the industry and service of the Natives and for those later policies which preserve the Africans from demoralization and decay. With such splendid and able administrators as M. Du Ponty, governor general of French West Africa, and with the announcement that Sir Frederick Lugard was returned to West Africa to amalgamate the two Nigerias as the governor of both Northern and Southern Nigeria, West African colonial policies, in the two greatest West African fields, were most hopefully turned before the war toward the dawn of a better day for the African and for those who had assumed control of these affairs.

LIBERIA THREATENED BY THE WAR

Notwithstanding the growing new attitude of Europeans toward the government and development of West Africans in the interest of the African races, and the influence of such a social and political environment upon the ultimate mission and destiny of Liberia, yet, at the very beginning of the war the Liberian domain was seriously threatened to be divided between Great Britain and France, neighbors on the north, east and south.

It was contended by Great Britain and France that Liberia had permitted Germany to use Liberian territory as a base of operation and for this reason the state should be overthrown and its domain and peoples divided, as early as December, 1914, according to La Marquise de Fontenoy.

In an editorial on "Liberia and the Philippines," December 25, 1914, the *Chicago Tribune* substantially committed the United States to this program of Anglo-French absorption of Liberia.⁹

⁸ The making of Northern Nigeria, Capt. C. W. J. Orr, R.A. Macmillan & Co., London.

Nigeria: Its Peoples and its Problems, E. D. Marel, Smith, Elder & Co., London.

⁹ Economic and Political Factors in Liberian Development, *Journal of Race Development*, 1915, George W. Ellis.

That the situation was actually critical for Liberia and important to the people of the United States is further described by Dr. Frederick Starr, of the University of Chicago, in his address on this point at McCormick Theological Seminary, February 12, 1915, soon after the announcement of the Marquise and the editorial of the *Tribune*.¹⁰

That Dr. Starr did not overstate the gravity of the situation is further emphasized by the facts that in 1885 Great Britain concluded the taking of Liberian northwest territory from Shebro to the Mano River. To even up with Great Britain France in 1892 forced from Liberia the Ivory Coast territory from San Pedro to the Cavalla River. And since, both nations at divers times were so biting off Liberian lands as to make inevitable the ultimate absorption of the Liberian Republic. In 1908 such an attempt to overthrow Liberia was about to be consummated when the government of the United States intervened upon the request of the Liberian people and undertook with England, France and Germany the refunding of Liberian international debts and the administration of Liberian customs service. In January, 1915, the American Colonization Society at Washington decided and resolved to exhaust every resource and power, not only to save the independence of Liberia, but to regain the lands wrested from the republic through either force, fraud or duress, the title to every alternate lot or section of which lands is still owned and claimed by the American Colonization Society.¹¹

PRESENT SITUATION AND OUTLOOK

As the European war continued the United States was drawn into the contest against the triumph of autocracy. Following the example of the United States, Liberia joined the Allies, added new angles to the West African situation, and sent her sons and spent her money to save France from

¹⁰ Economic and Political Factors in Liberian Development, *Journal of Race Development*, 1915, George W. Ellis

¹¹ Sociological Appraisalment of Liberian Resources, *Journal of Race Development*, 1915, George W. Ellis.

the complete destruction of the Hun and to help to preserve civilization for the safety and freedom of the world.

One of the factors which tended toward the preservation of Liberia was the jealousy and competition of European powers, typified by the keen rivalry and aggressive activity of Germany on the West Coast. But Germany now has been eliminated from the West African situation.

While Liberia has lost the influence of German rivalry on the West African Coast, on the one hand, on the other she has gained what is much more positive and valuable: The increased friendship and good will of Great Britain and France, by joining the allied cause at a time when military fortune was adverse; and the renewed and marked interest of the United States, evidenced by the United States loan to Liberia of \$5,000,000, through the good offices of Dr. Emmett J. Scott, Special Assistant to the Secretary of War, Dr. Ernest Lyon, Liberian Consul General, Dr. Robert R. Moten, Principal of Tuskegee Institute, and other prominent Americans.

Under the sway of these powers and new developments it would seem that the future of Liberia is both bright and secure.

In the thought that three-quarters of a million of Native Africans from French Africa helped to win the battle of the Marne, to stop the invading Germans at Verdun, and to save France and Great Britain from unchecked and ruthless desolation; when we remember that the Natives from West Africa by the hundreds of thousands fought and died in France and elsewhere under the British and Belgian colors for the continued sway and political dominion of European powers, it is not unreasonable to expect and demand that in the future European control will do something tangible to educate and develop the African and hasten the time when Africa shall be ruled by Africans.

The idea that the ultimate rule of the European, in its final analysis, must be for the African, must now be stressed more and more until it dominates alike those who rule in Europe and administer in Africa.

By this service to civilization and the world the African is entitled to have all the forces of modern science and education utilized to develop him along African requirements, through the gradual processes of evolution and social progress.

The Negro Africans from the United States, Haiti, the West Indies, Liberia, North, West and South Africa have demonstrated by casting their fortunes with the Allies, not only equal capacity to comprehend the great and vital aims and ends of life and civilization, but by their love and loyalty to the right, the highest test, and by their courage and blood in the greatest and most destructive of all wars, they have proven their right beyond further question to equal opportunity to develop the best in them and to enjoy beside other races the advantages and rewards, offered by the economic, social and political life of the world, to which they have made so rich and unselfish contribution.

This war has not been in vain, if the white nations have learned, even at so great a price, the natural and potential equality of all men and races, the lack of knowing which constitutes the first great and invisible cause of the war.

When this great lesson has been learned the present race troubles and conflicts will be regarded as but human problems to be solved and worked out in the historic way.

Then, the world will be safe for democracy, Liberia will be safe in West Africa, and the Negro will be safe in the United States.

Then, the dignity of an enlightened manhood for the black man in Africa through representation and self-government will be among the great functions of European colonial administration of all subject peoples and groups.

The real conflict and antagonism once existing between the principles of the Liberian State and European colonial policies in West Africa will have entirely disappeared.

Liberia will no longer be regarded as striking a discordant note in West African affairs, but will be truly appreciated as a co-worker in something like her true light,—a pioneer in the interest of humanity though black, so poetically ex-

pressed by Mr. Justice Stewart in one of the recently adopted Liberian anthems:

Liberia the gem of West Africa,
The land where the Negro is free,
From race prejudice and proscription,
We lift our hearts unto thee,
May thy life be ever and ever,
We'll work with all our might through thee
To proclaim by actual practice
Equality and fraternity.¹²

¹² Liberian Acts, 1912, page 42.